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Bilder Awarded Cromwell Foundation Grant

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Bilder Awarded Cromwell Foundation Grant

11/14/08--PROFESSOR MARY BILDER HAS BEEN AWARDED WITH A PRESTIGIOUS GRANT FROM THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL FOUNDATION TO FUND THE WORK ON HER NEW BOOK, ENTITLED MADISON'S HAND.

11/14/08--Professor Mary Bilder has been awarded with a prestigious grant from the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation to fund the work on her new book, entitled Madison's Hand. The book will explore the impact of James Madison's notes upon our historic understanding of the Constitution and his mediation of the Constitutional Convention.

In a letter awarding the grant, John Gordon, secretary of the William Nelson Cromwell Foundation, wrote: "the trustees were influenced by, among other things, the importance and originality of the subject of [Prof. Bilder's] work, the high quality of her previous publications, and the great respect for her scholarship voiced by other leaders in the field of legal history."

Madison had great influence over the interpretation of the Constitution, and the documents that led up to writing the Constitution--such as the Federalist Papers, the official Convention journal, and the first printed publication of the extant records of the ratification debates.

"Madison's Hand will combine traditional political and constitutional approaches to Madison's notes with an emphasis on biography, cultural history and constitutional historiography," Bilder said. "The book will argue that our ability to see what happened at the Convention is nearly impossible except through Madison."

Bilder will seek to portray a different Madison: "a man fascinated with historical narratives and legislative publications; a man who sought to nurture and control his reputation as a founding father."

William Nelson Cromwell, partner of the Sullivan & Cromwell law firm in New York, established the foundation in 1930 in order to support legal education and research in American legal history. The foundation gives grants to assist in original research and writing on the subject. The current Chair of the foundation is Conrad K. Harper, a retired partner of the New York law firm Simpson Thacher and Bartlett LLP.